

CABINET

2 MARCH 2021

REFERRAL FROM REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20MPH PILOT SCHEME IN MEDWAY

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Filmer, Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services

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Summary

The report sets out a referral from the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 January 2021 in relation to a pilot 20mph scheme in Medway.

1. Budget and policy framework
 - 1.1. Overview and Scrutiny Committees may make recommendations to the Cabinet arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process (Constitution – Articles of the Constitution - Chapter 2, Article 6, Paragraph 6.4).
 - 1.2. The setting of local speed limits, including 20mph schemes, falls within existing policy and legislative frameworks under Medway Council's powers as local highway authority. The setting of speed limits in support of transport objectives links directly to the Council Plan priority outcome of Getting Around Medway, and Local Transport Plan (LTP3) priorities and objectives.
2. Background
 - 2.1. On 14 January 2021, the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report setting out a response to the recommendations of previous meetings of the Committee concerning the possible introduction of a pilot 20mph scheme in Medway.
 - 2.2. Appended to the report was a 20mph Area-wide (Blanket) Speed Restriction Monitoring Report providing an overview of monitoring carried out within other local authorities where 20mph schemes operated, an outline of the recently

published Department for Transport commissioned research around the effectiveness of 20mph speed limit signed only schemes, and a summary of the effectiveness of ten existing 20mph schemes in Medway.

- 2.3. The Committee discussed the report and in response to questions, the Head of Transport and Parking informed the Committee that road safety engineering work was evidence-based considering crash records and interventions. The introduction of 20mph speed restrictions was only one measure that was available to improve road safety.
- 2.4. The Committee acknowledged that from research provided, the success of 20mph schemes was variable but it was generally considered that where there were requests for traffic calming measures, the introduction of a 20mph zone could be more cost effective than more expensive engineering solutions.
- 2.5. The Committee subsequently recommended that Cabinet be requested to use the Members' Priorities Fund to introduce a 20mph pilot scheme in Medway, taking an evidence-based approach but ideally in an area where several schools are located.

3. Options

- 3.1. The following options are available to the Cabinet:
- 3.2. Option 1 – To agree the recommendation from the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and request that officers identify a suitable area of Medway that could then be developed as a pilot 20mph scheme, for consideration at a future meeting.
- 3.3. Option 2 – To not agree the recommendation from the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to a pilot 20mph scheme but note that permanent schemes remain a viable option for consideration by officers and the Portfolio Holder for Frontline Services on a case-by-case basis.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1. There is an established positive relationship between vehicle speed and injury collisions; higher vehicle speeds increase the likelihood of injury collisions, and those collisions can be higher in severity. Low traffic speed therefore remains a valid objective in residential areas, and other areas where a significant number of journeys are made by vulnerable road users. This is particularly relevant to new road construction and development proposals. Retrospective application of lower speed limits can take an evidence-based approach, taking account of the potential benefits in that location.
- 4.2. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate a significant change in collisions and casualties following the introduction of 20mph signed only speed limits in residential areas.

4.3. In Medway, the installation of 20mph schemes with engineered road layouts (particularly 20mph zones containing physical traffic calming measures) have been effective in lowering vehicle speeds and reducing road casualty problems.

5. Diversity Impact Assessment

5.1. If the Cabinet agrees the request of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Diversity Impact Assessment will be undertaken during the development of a pilot 20mph scheme.

6. Risk management

6.1. Risks related to the consideration of a pilot 20mph scheme are set out as follows:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Raised expectation of scheme delivery	Agreeing to the recommendation may raise expectation that highway changes will be forthcoming.	Clear communication from the outset that all highway alteration schemes are only confirmed as deliverable following due process: feasibility assessment, detailed design, funding availability and consultation	C3
Delivery of a pilot 20mph scheme may generate expectations that further schemes will be forthcoming, and/or that 20mph schemes will become a default option in addressing road safety concerns.	The delivery of a 20mph pilot scheme may raise expectation of additional speed limit changes across Medway, potentially in unsuitable areas.	Clear communication that all highway safety alterations are evidence based, in pursuit of agreed policy and objectives, and that 20mph schemes represent only one of a number of options available to promote road safety in Medway	C3

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Perceived lack of support for road safety improvements	If the recommendation is not accepted, it may be perceived as a lack of support for projects aimed at making roads safer for Medway's road users (particularly vulnerable road users).	Clear communication that road safety is a priority and that 20mph schemes represent only one of many options available to promote road safety in Medway	C3

7. Consultation

7.1. No formal consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report.

8. Climate change implications

8.1. [The Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019](#) - item 1038D refers and has set a target for Medway to become carbon neutral by 2050.

8.2. Climate change implications would be assessed during the development of a pilot scheme.

9. Financial implications

9.1. The resource implications for constructing a 20mph scheme can be significant, depending on the nature of the scheme, the size of the area involved, and the engineering measures deemed necessary to support it. This would be fully assessed during the design process through appropriate cost-benefit analysis.

10. Legal implications

10.1. There are no legal implications in respect of this report. Any decision to proceed with a speed limit alteration scheme, such as 20mph, would fall within the Council's existing speed limit setting powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

11. Recommendations

11.1. The Cabinet is asked to consider the following recommendation from the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agree a way forward:

“That this Committee recommends to Cabinet that the Member’s Priorities Fund be used to introduce a 20mph pilot zone in Medway taking an evidence-based approach but ideally in an area where several schools are located.”

12. Suggested reasons for decision

- 12.1. The Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee has made this recommendation to Cabinet in accordance with its entitlement, under the Council’s Constitution, to make recommendations to Cabinet arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process (Constitution – Articles of the Constitution - Chapter 2, Article 6, Paragraph 6.4). Cabinet is, therefore, required to consider its response.

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Appendices

Appendix A – 20mph Areawide Speed Restriction Monitoring Report

Appendix B – The Effectiveness of Medway’s 20mph Schemes

Appendix C – 20mph Schemes in Medway, Report to Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 14 January 2021

Background papers

None.